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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3989
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0071
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 0344

C O N F I D E N T I A L RIGA 000328

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FOR U/S NICK BURNS FROM AMBASSADOR BAILEY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/09/2012

TAGS: PHUM PREL AORC UNHRC BO LG

SUBJECT: LATVIA WILL VOTE AGAINST BELARUS

REF: A) STATE 63345 B) STATE 58036

Classified By: AMBASSADOR CATHERINE TODD BAILEY. REASON: 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) I am comfortable that Latvia will not vote for Belarus for election to the Human Rights Council. The government has already made that decision. If Bosnia announces its candidacy, there should not be any difficulty in getting Latvia to vote for them along with Slovenia.

¶2. (C) A/DCM and acting P/E chief have raised the issue of Belarus' candidacy for the HRC on several occasions in recent weeks, including at the Undersecretary and political director level at the MFA. We pressed the GOL to work within the E. European Group to find other candidates. We were consistently told that Latvia is working to find other alternatives, but without success. Attempts to bring in the French and British missions here for coordinated approaches per ref b were unsuccessful prior to the government finalizing its position.

¶3. (C) On May 9, Latvian Poldir Ilgvars Klava confirmed to A/DCM that the Latvian government had the day before adopted a formal position in opposition to Belarus' candidacy. Yet, he predicted, Belarus would still likely win the vote on the basis of strong NAM support. (Note: This was prior to ref A's announcement that Bosnia might yet run.)

¶4. (C/NF) Klava confided that Latvia had looked at running itself after our initial urging, but decided that it could not win and the government was unwilling to take the press and political hit for an unsuccessful candidacy. Latvia looked at others in the E. European group but other countries were unable (due to limited staff support) or unwilling (afraid to lose) to stand for election.

BAILEY